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(54) **ORAL HYGIENE TOOL**

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(60) Provisional application No. 61/923,206, filed on Jan. 2, 2014.

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CPC **A46B 15/0081** (2013.01); **A61B 17/244** (2013.01); **A46B 2200/1066** (2013.01)

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CPC .. A46B 5/005; A46B 15/0081; A61B 17/244; B25G 1/04
USPC 15/111, 144.3, 144.4; 16/429; 606/161; D4/108; D24/147

See application file for complete search history.

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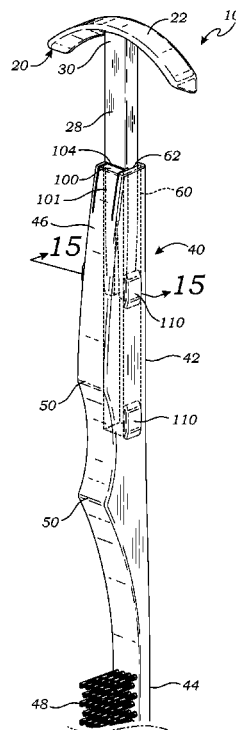
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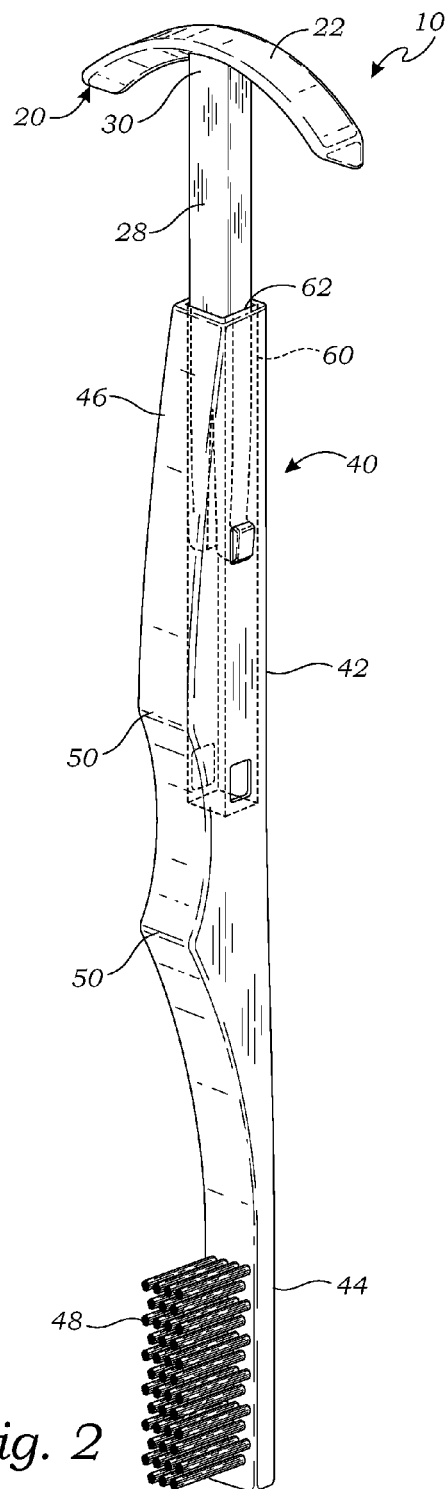
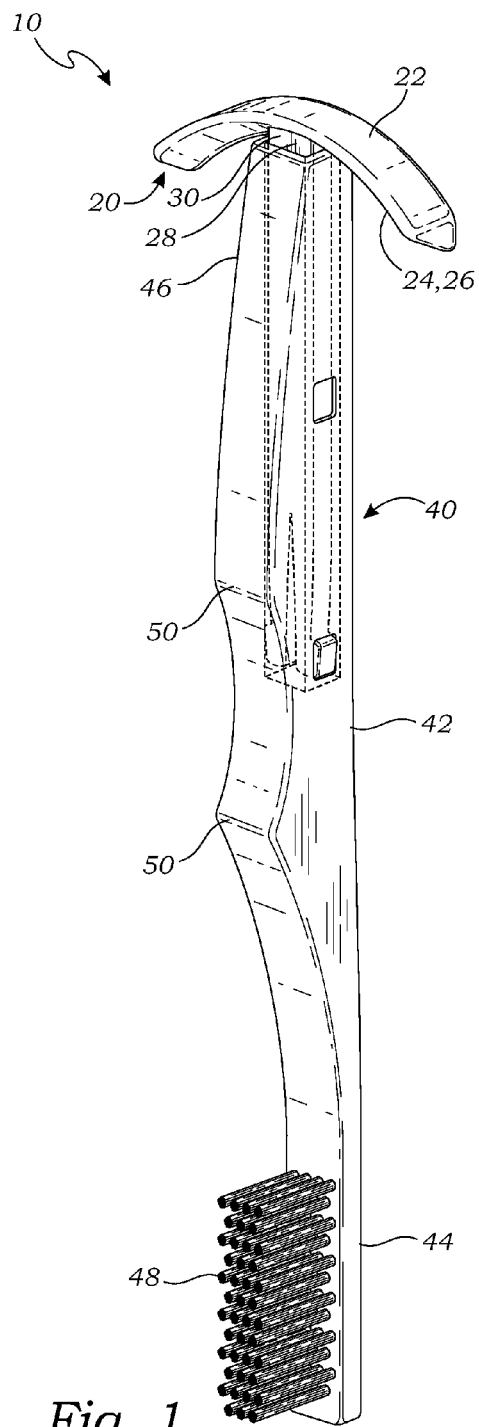
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Eric Karich; Karich & Associates

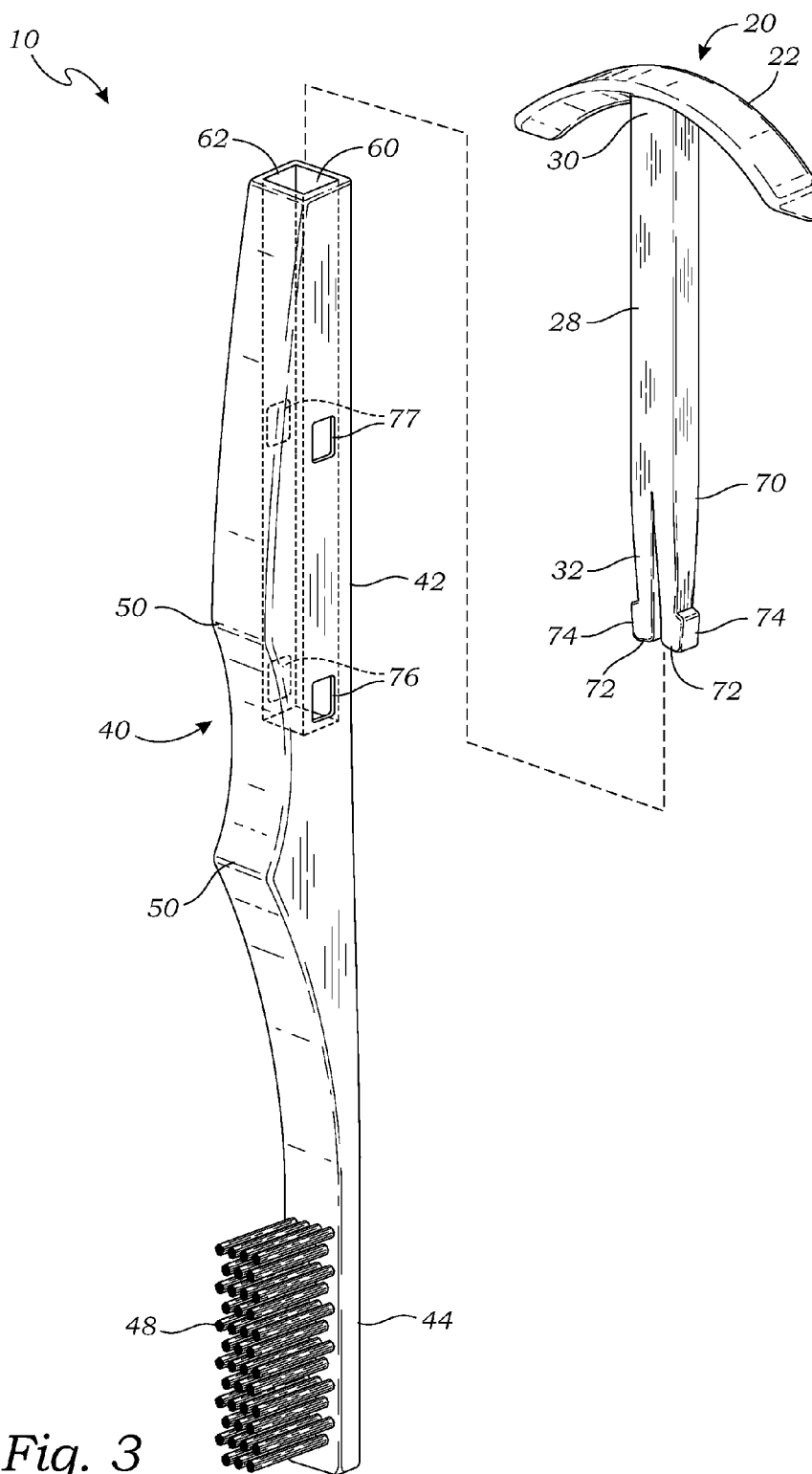
(57) **ABSTRACT**

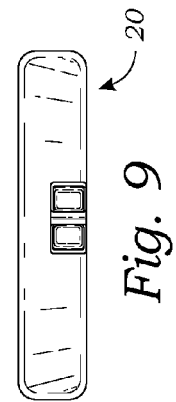
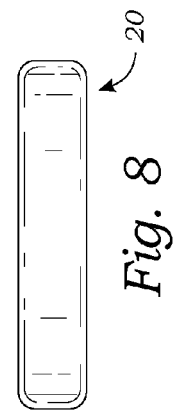
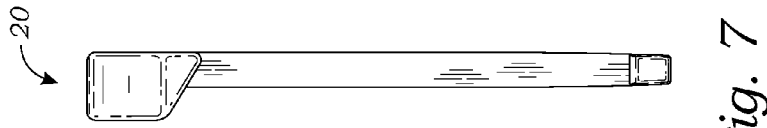
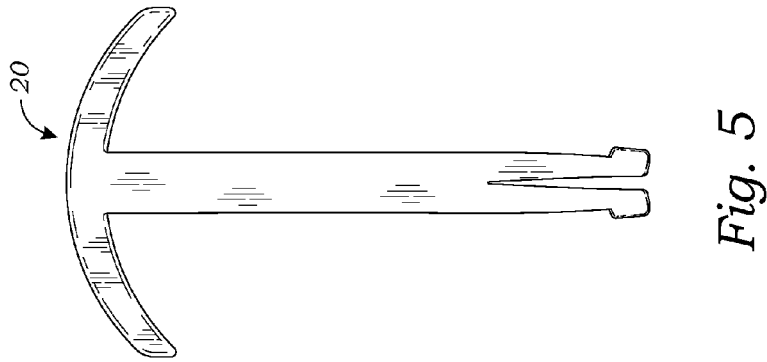
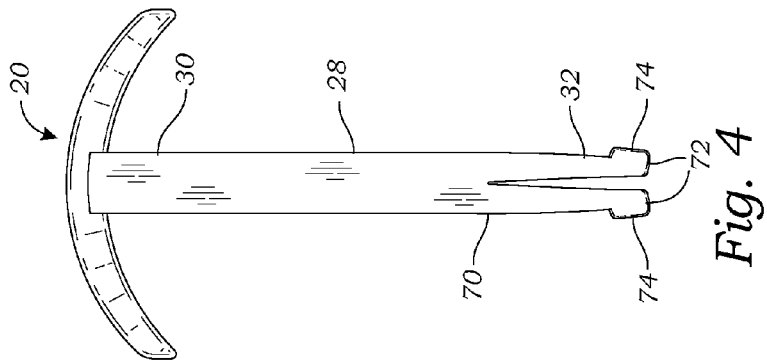
A oral hygiene tool has a tongue scraper and a toothbrush with an elongate toothbrush body. The tongue scraper is telescopically engaged with the elongate toothbrush body of the toothbrush, so that the tongue scraper can move between a collapsed configuration and an extended configuration relative to the toothbrush. A locking system may be included for locking the tongue scraper with the toothbrush so that relative movement is prohibited, and a resilient wall may cover and seal each of the locking apertures.

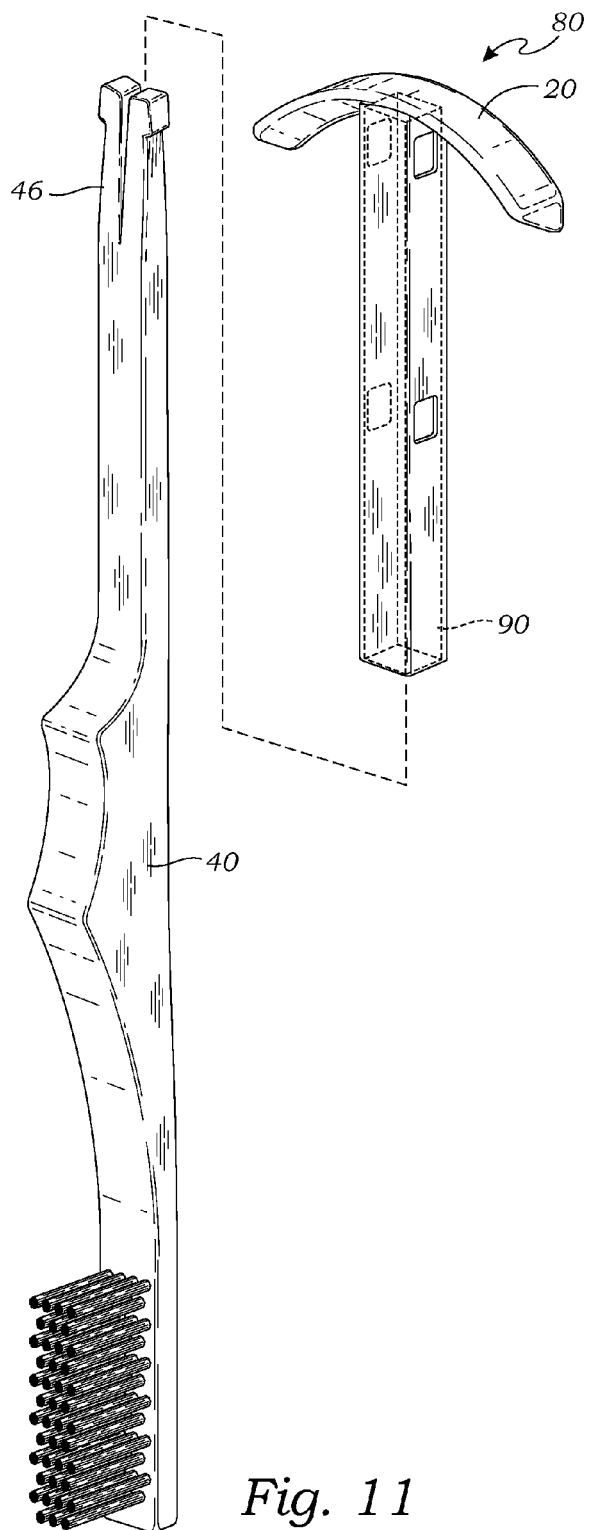
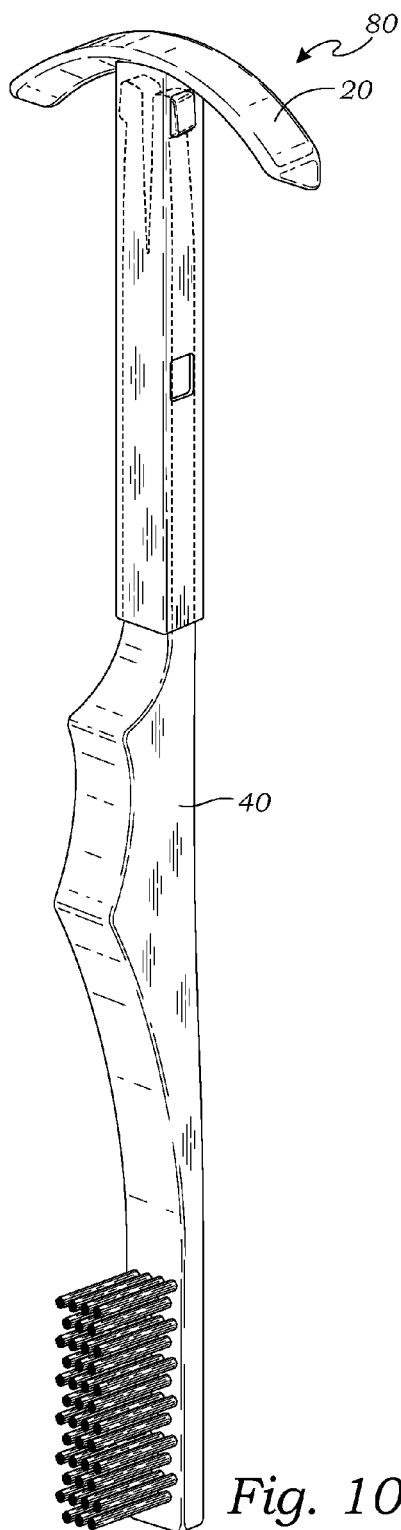
4 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets











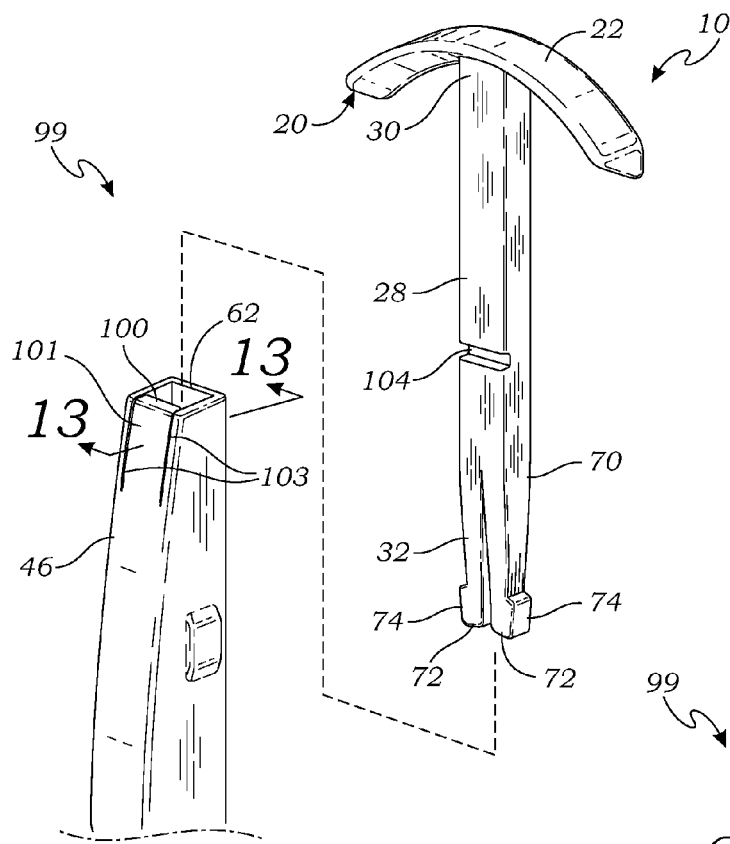


Fig. 12

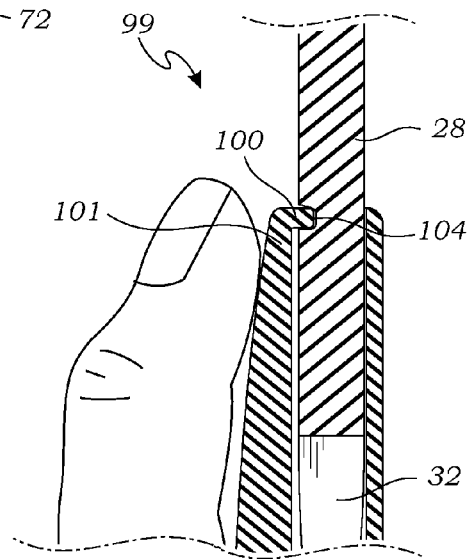


Fig. 13

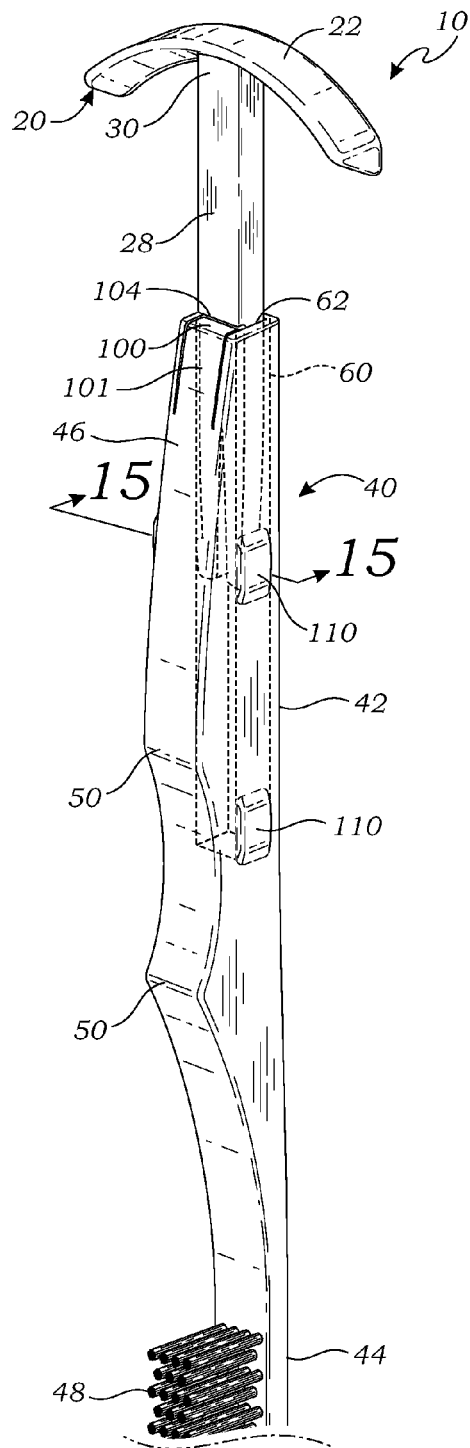


Fig. 14

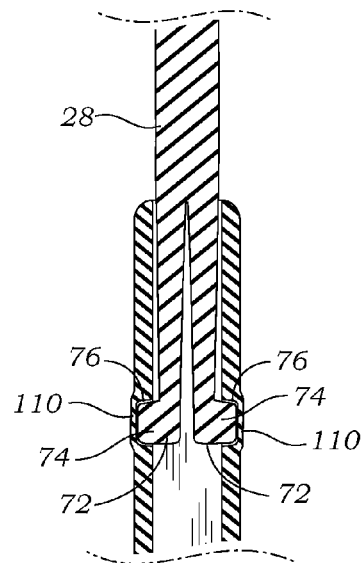


Fig. 15

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ORAL HYGIENE TOOL

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application for a utility patent is a continuation-in-part of a previously filed utility patent, having the application Ser. No. 14/305,549, filed Jun. 16, 2014, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,055,809.

This application for a utility patent also claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/923,206, filed Jan. 2, 2014.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates generally to oral hygiene tools, and more particularly to a tool that includes both a toothbrush and a tongue scraper.

2. Description of Related Art

Tongue scrapers and toothbrushes are common oral hygiene products. The prior art teaches a simple combination of the two tools; however, the resulting device is unwieldy, and is either too short to use, or too long to store. The present invention addresses those needs by providing a novel and efficient tongue scraper that telescopically engages a toothbrush.

The prior art teaches toothbrushes, tongue scrapers, and the combination of tooth brushes and tongue scrapers. However, the prior art does not teach such a combination with a tongue scraper that telescopically engages a toothbrush, including a locking mechanism for locking the tongue scraper in either a collapsed configuration or an extended configuration. The present invention fulfills these needs and provides further advantages as described in the following summary.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention teaches certain benefits in construction and use which give rise to the objectives described below.

The present invention provides a oral hygiene tool for scraping a tongue and brushing teeth. The oral hygiene tool has a tongue scraper with an elongate scraper body having an elongate upper edge forming a scraping surface for the tongue, and an elongate connector body having a first end and a second end, the elongate scraper body being connected to the first end transverse to the elongate connector body. The oral hygiene tool also includes a toothbrush with an elongate toothbrush body having a proximal end and a distal end, a plurality of brushes extending from the proximal end of the elongate toothbrush body. The elongate connector body of the tongue scraper is telescopically engaged with the elongate toothbrush body of the toothbrush, so that the tongue scraper can move between a collapsed configuration and an extended configuration relative to the toothbrush.

In one embodiment, the oral hygiene tool further includes a locking system for locking the tongue scraper with the toothbrush so that relative movement is prohibited. The locking system may include an inwardly extending flange that can move between a locking position and an unlocking position, a biasing mechanism for biasing the inwardly extending flange towards the unlocking position, and a groove formed for receiving the inwardly extending flange when moved to the locking position.

In another embodiment, the oral hygiene tool further includes a resilient wall covering and sealing each of the locking apertures so that when the at least one locking prong

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engages one of the locking apertures, the locking prong may be disengaged from the locking aperture by pressing inwardly on the resilient wall.

A primary objective of the present invention is to provide an oral hygiene tool having advantages not taught by the prior art.

Another objective is to provide an oral hygiene tool with a tongue scraper that telescopically engages a toothbrush.

Another objective is to provide an oral hygiene tool with a locking system for locking the tongue scraper in a given position for use of the tongue scraper.

A further objective is to provide an oral hygiene tool that includes resilient walls covering each of the locking apertures of the toothbrush.

Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate the present invention. In such drawings:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an oral hygiene tool, in a collapsed configuration, according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool in an extended configuration;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool in a disengaged configuration;

FIG. 4 is a front elevational view of a tongue scraper of the oral hygiene tool;

FIG. 5 is a rear elevational view thereof;

FIG. 6 is a left elevational view thereof;

FIG. 7 is a right elevational view thereof;

FIG. 8 is a top plan view thereof;

FIG. 9 is a bottom plan view thereof;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool in the collapsed configuration, according to another embodiment of the present invention, illustrating the tongue scraper having the elongate inner chamber;

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool, illustrating the oral hygiene tool in a disengaged configuration;

FIG. 12 is an exploded perspective view of a second embodiment of the oral hygiene tool, illustrating a locking system that can be used to lock the tongue scraper into a given position relative to the toothbrush;

FIG. 13 is a sectional view thereof taken along line 13-13 in FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool of FIG. 12, illustrating resilient walls covering each of the locking apertures of the toothbrush; and

FIG. 15 is a sectional view thereof taken along line 15-15 in FIG. 14.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The above-described drawing figures illustrate the invention, an oral hygiene tool 10 for scraping a tongue and brushing teeth. The oral hygiene tool 10 combines a tongue scraper 20 and a toothbrush 40 that engage each other in an extendable, or telescoping, relationship.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool 10 in a collapsed configuration, FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool 10 in an extended configuration, and FIG. 3

is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool **10** in a disengaged configuration. As illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, the tongue scraper **20** includes an elongate scraper body **22** and an elongate connector body **28**. The elongate scraper body **22** extends laterally on either side of and generally traverse to the elongate connector body **28**, and includes an elongate upper edge **24** that is shaped for scraping the tongue. In the present embodiment, the elongate scraper body **22** is curved and has an upwardly extending wedge-shaped cross section that narrows to the elongate upper edge **24**. In other embodiments, the elongate scraper body **22** may have an alternative structure with any shape known to one skilled in the art for scraping the tongue, and such alternatives should be considered within the scope of the present invention.

As illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, the elongate connector body **28** of the tongue scraper **20** has a first end **30** and a second end **32**. The first end **30** is connected with the elongate scraper body **22**. The second end **32** extends outwardly for engaging the toothbrush **40** in a telescoping manner. In the embodiment of FIGS. 1-3, the elongate connector body **28** is a post shaped as an elongate cuboid. In alternate embodiments the elongate connector body **28** may be a structure with any desired shape, e.g. a bar, rod, wedge, or other shape desired by one skilled in the art. In other embodiments, the elongate connector body **28** may have a tapered section (not shown) where the elongate connector body **28** connects to the elongate scraper body **22** so as either not to obstruct, or reduce the obstruction of, the portion of the elongate scraper body **22** that is in contact with the tongue during use. While FIG. 1 illustrates one embodiment of the elongate connector body **28**, those skilled in the art may devise alternative embodiments, and these alternative or equivalent are considered within the scope of the present invention.

As illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, the toothbrush **40** has an elongate toothbrush body **42** which may be used as a handle for the toothbrush **40**, and which telescopically engages the elongate connector body **28** of the tongue scraper **20**. The elongate toothbrush body **42** may have a proximal end **44**, a distal end **46**, and brushes **48** extending from the proximal end **44** of the elongate toothbrush body **42**. The proximal end **44** of the toothbrush **40** is the end of the toothbrush **40** which is inserted into the mouth during use.

As illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, the elongate toothbrush body **42** may also include a plurality of raised sections **50** to aid in the grasping and use of the oral hygiene tool **10**, creating an ergonomically suitable handle. The presence of the raised sections **50** may create depressions which conform to functions described above, e.g. providing an ergonomic handle for use, or any other functions desired by one skilled in the art. In alternate embodiments, the raised sections **50** and the depressions may be varied in shape and design to serve any function e.g. providing a gentle or comfortable surface, providing ridges to prevent slippage, providing features such as clasps or releases for storing the oral hygiene tool **10**, or any other features desired by one skilled in the art.

The distal end **46** is the end of the elongate toothbrush body **42** which telescopically engages the elongate connector body **28** of the tongue scraper **20**. In the embodiment of FIGS. 1-3, the distal end **46** includes an elongate inner chamber **60** shaped to receive the second end **32** of the elongate connector body **28**, via a chamber aperture **62**. The elongate connector body **28** and the elongate toothbrush body **42** may then telescopically engage each other.

The telescoping construction of the present invention allows several configurations where the length of the oral hygiene tool **10** may be varied according to the needs of the user. In the present embodiment, shown in FIGS. 1-3, the

elongate connector body **28** of the tongue scraper **20** may be telescopically engaged with the elongate toothbrush body **42** of the toothbrush **40**, so that the tongue scraper **20** can move between a collapsed configuration and an extended configuration relative to the toothbrush **40**. In alternate embodiments, the telescoping of the tongue scraper **20** may be accomplished by a variety of means, e.g. interlocking bodies, tracks, extensions, or any methods desired by one skilled in the art.

As shown in the embodiment of FIGS. 1-3, the elongate inner chamber **60** is within the elongate toothbrush body **42**. The inner chamber may have the chamber aperture **62** at the distal end **46** for allowing the elongate connector body **28** to be inserted into the elongate inner chamber **60**. The elongate inner chamber **60** may be shaped to allow the elongate connector body **28** of the tongue scraper **20** to telescopically engage the elongate toothbrush body **42**.

The elongate inner chamber **60** may have any shape which allows the elongate connector body **28** to telescopically engage with the elongate toothbrush body **42**. A square cross-sectional shape, as shown, prevents relative rotation, but in alternative embodiments other cross-sectional shapes may be used. The elongate inner chamber **60** may extend any length longitudinally along the elongate toothbrush body **42**. As shown in the embodiment of FIG. 1, one definition of the collapsed configuration may be when the elongate inner chamber **60** is located within the elongate toothbrush body **42** and the elongate connector body **28** is substantially inside the elongate toothbrush body **42**. While FIGS. 1-3 illustrate one embodiment of the elongate inner chamber **60**, those skilled in the art may devise alternative embodiments, and these alternative or equivalent are considered within the scope of the present invention.

As shown in FIGS. 1-3, the telescoping construction of the oral hygiene tool **10** allows the extended configuration in addition to the collapsed configuration. As shown in FIG. 2, one definition of the extended configuration may be when the elongate inner chamber **60** is located within the elongate toothbrush body **42** and the elongate connector body **28** is substantially, though not completely, outside the elongate toothbrush body **42**.

As shown in FIG. 3, the telescopic construction of the oral hygiene tool **10** may allow for the toothbrush **40** and the tongue scraper **20** to be physically separated, which may be defined as the disengaged configuration. In such a configuration, the toothbrush **40** and/or the tongue scraper **20** may be used separately, if desired by a user. In one embodiment, the act of disengagement is reversible, allowing the tongue scraper **20** and the toothbrush **40** to be reassembled. Reassembly may be done by inserting the second end **32** of the tongue scraper **20** through the chamber aperture **62** of the elongate inner chamber **60**, thereby re-engaging the tongue scraper **20** and the toothbrush **40**. The ability of the oral hygiene tool **10** to be connected together into a single tool which is compact in size enables the oral hygiene tool **10** to be easily transported, stored, and also used while traveling.

As shown in FIG. 3, the oral hygiene tool **10** may further include a locking mechanism **70** for locking the position of the tongue scraper **20** with respect to the toothbrush **40**. In the embodiment of FIG. 3, the locking mechanism **70** includes locking apertures **76** and **77**, and resilient arms **72** with locking prongs **74** which removably engage the locking apertures **76** and **77** for releasably locking the tongue scraper **20** with respect to the toothbrush **40**.

In the present embodiment, there are a first pair of locking apertures **77** located closest to the distal end **46** of the toothbrush **40**, and a second pair of locking apertures **76** located between the first pair of locking apertures **77** and the proximal

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end 44 of the toothbrush 40. The first pair of locking apertures 77 are longitudinally separated and azimuthally aligned with the second pair of locking apertures 76. When the elongate connector body 28 is positioned such that the first pair of locking apertures 77 are engaged, the oral hygiene tool 10 is in the extended position. When the elongate connector body 28 is positioned such that the second pair of locking aperture 76 are engaged, the oral hygiene tool 10 is in the collapsed position. While FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of the locking apertures 76 and 77, those skilled in the art may devise alternative embodiments, and these alternative or equivalent are considered within the scope of the present invention.

The resilient arms 72 extend from the elongate connector body 28, and is flexible enough to allow some movement of the resilient arm 72, and in particular, allow a radial deflection which increases towards the second end 32 and which effectively narrows the effective diameter or area of the second end 32. In alternate embodiments, the resilient arm 72 may be constructed differently, e.g. a compressible arm (as opposed to a deflecting arm), or any other sort of resilient arm 72 desired by one skilled in the art. In the present embodiment, there is a pair of the resilient arms 72, each resilient arm 72 being opposite one another azimuthally on the elongate connector body 28. In alternate embodiments, there may be any number of, and orientation of, the resilient arms 72 as desired by one skilled in the art.

The present embodiment may have a locking prong 74 extending radially from the resilient arm 72. In the present embodiment, the locking prong 74 is a protrusion shaped to removably and lockingly engage the locking apertures 76 and 77.

The resilient arm 72 may be pressed away from the locking apertures 76 and 77 to disengage the locking mechanism 70 and allow the elongate connector body 28 to slide longitudinally relative to the connector body 28. In the present embodiment, the locking arm is angled relative to the longitudinal axis such that when a longitudinal force is applied, there is an inward force on the resilient arms 72. If the inward force on the resilient arm 72 is sufficient to deflect the resilient arm 72 inward at the location of the locking prong 74, such that the locking prong 74 disengages from the locking apertures 76 and 77, the locking mechanism 70 will become disengaged and allow the telescoping motion of the toothbrush 40 and the tongue scraper 20. The term "locking prong" and "locking aperture" are both hereby defined to include any form of interlocking element and receiver (hole, aperture, bore, etc.) that can interlock as shown. In alternate embodiments, other means for engaging/disengaging may be used, e.g. releases, springs, catches, tracks, compression fittings, or any other means desired by one skilled in the art.

FIG. 4 is a front elevational view of the tongue scraper 20, and FIGS. 5-9 are rear, left, and right elevational views, and top and bottom views, of the tongue scraper 20.

FIGS. 10 and 11 are perspective views of a second embodiment of the oral hygiene tool 80. In this embodiment, the male/female relationship between the toothbrush and the tongue scraper 20 may be reversed. In the embodiment of FIGS. 10-11, the elongate connector body 28 of the tongue scraper 20 may include an elongate inner chamber 90 (that is similar to the chamber 60 of FIGS. 1-3), and the distal end 46 of the toothbrush 40 telescopically engages the elongate inner chamber 90.

FIG. 12 is an exploded perspective view of a second embodiment of the oral hygiene tool 10. FIG. 13 is a sectional view thereof taken along line 13-13 in FIG. 12. As shown in FIGS. 12 and 13, the oral hygiene tool 10 may further include

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a locking system 99 that can be used to lock the tongue scraper 20 into a given position relative to the toothbrush 40.

In this embodiment, the locking system 99 includes an inwardly extending flange 100 that can move between a locking position and an unlocking position. The locking system 99 may include a biasing mechanism 101 for biasing the inwardly extending flange 100 towards the unlocking position, and a groove 104 formed for receiving the inwardly extending flange 100 when moved to the locking position.

In this embodiment, the biasing mechanism 101 is a resilient hinge that pivotally mounts the inwardly extending flange 100 on the toothbrush, and is biased towards the unlocking position, although this could be reversed. Also in this embodiment, the groove 104 traverses the elongate connector body 28 of the tongue scraper 20. The resilient hinge 101 may be separated from the toothbrush by a pair of slots 103, as shown, or formed in another manner.

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of the oral hygiene tool 10 of FIG. 12, illustrating resilient walls 110 covering each of the locking apertures 76 (shown as reference numbers 76 and 77 in FIG. 3) of the toothbrush. FIG. 15 is a sectional view thereof taken along line 15-15 in FIG. 14.

As shown in FIGS. 14 and 15, the resilient walls 110 cover and seal each of the locking apertures 76 and 77 (as shown in FIG. 3) so that contaminants cannot enter the elongate inner chamber 60 of the toothbrush 40. The resilient walls 110 are resilient, however, so that when the at least one locking prong 74 is engaged in one of the locking apertures 76, the locking prong 74 may be pressed inwardly and disengaged from the locking aperture 76 and 77 by pressing inwardly on the resilient wall 110.

As used in this application, the term "longitudinally" is taken to be the direction along an axis extending through the elongate connector body and the elongate toothbrush body. The longitudinal direction may then be defined by the direction of the telescoping motion of the elongate connector body and the elongate toothbrush body, described throughout the application. The term "azimuthally" is then the azimuthal or polar coordinate around the axis. The term "radially" is then the radial direction from the axis.

As used in this application, the words "a," "an," and "one" are defined to include one or more of the referenced item unless specifically stated otherwise. Also, the terms "have," "include," "contain," and similar terms are defined to mean "comprising" unless specifically stated otherwise. Furthermore, the terminology used in the specification provided above is hereby defined to include similar and/or equivalent terms, and/or alternative embodiments that would be considered obvious to one skilled in the art given the teachings of the present patent application.

What is claimed is:

1. A oral hygiene tool for scraping a tongue and brushing teeth, the oral hygiene tool comprising:

a tongue scraper comprising an elongate scraper body having an elongate upper edge forming a scraping surface for the tongue, and an elongate connector body having a first end and a second end, the elongate scraper body being connected to the first end transverse to the elongate connector body;

a toothbrush comprising an elongate toothbrush body having a proximal end and a distal end, and a plurality of brushes extending from the proximal end;

the elongate connector body of the tongue scraper being telescopically engaged with the elongate toothbrush body of the toothbrush, so that the tongue scraper can move between a collapsed configuration and an extended configuration relative to the toothbrush; and

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a locking system for locking the tongue scraper with the toothbrush so that relative movement is prohibited, wherein the locking system includes an inwardly extending flange that can move between a locking position and an unlocking position, a biasing mechanism for biasing the inwardly extending flange towards the unlocking position, and a groove formed for receiving the inwardly extending flange when moved to the locking position.

2. The oral hygiene tool of claim 1, wherein the locking system comprises a resilient hinge that pivotally mounts the inwardly extending flange on the toothbrush, and wherein the groove traverses the elongate connector body of the tongue scraper.

3. The oral hygiene tool of claim 2, wherein the resilient hinge is separated from the toothbrush by a pair of slots.

4. A oral hygiene tool for scraping a tongue and brushing teeth, the oral hygiene tool comprising:

a tongue scraper comprising an elongate scraper body having an elongate upper edge forming a scraping surface for the tongue, and an elongate connector body having a first end and a second end, the elongate scraper body

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being connected to the first end transverse to the elongate connector body, the second end having at least one resilient arm that includes a locking prong extending radially outward from the at least one resilient arm;

a toothbrush comprising an elongate toothbrush body that defines an elongate inner chamber shaped to receive the second end of the elongate connector body via a chamber aperture, the elongate toothbrush body having a proximal end and a distal end, locking apertures through the elongate toothbrush body, and a plurality of brushes extending from the proximal end;

the elongate connector body of the tongue scraper being telescopically engaged with the elongate toothbrush body of the toothbrush, so that the tongue scraper can move between a collapsed configuration and an extended configuration relative to the toothbrush; and

a resilient wall covering and sealing each of the locking apertures so that when the at least one locking prong engages one of the locking apertures, the locking prong may be disengaged from the locking aperture by pressing inwardly on the resilient wall.

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